

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

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(Classification and Control Markings)

1. COUNTRY: ARGENTINA/BRAZIL
 2. SUBJECT: Argentine/Brazilian Border Area
 (North East Misiones Province) (U)
 3. ISC NUMBER:
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 5. PLACE AND DATE OF ACQ: NE Misiones Prov.,
 Argentina; Nov 71
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15. SUMMARY:

(U) This report deals with the accessibility of the Argentine North Eastern frontier to mutual foot and vehicular traffic by both ARGENTINA and BRAZIL. The reporting officer traveling through the area observed an aspect of that border area which while obvious to the local populace is nonetheless not commonly known by Argentines, let alone some Argentine military officers. It was observed that nearly 95 kilometers of Argentine/Brazilian border area present no major obstacles to foot and vehicular traffic. Thus contrary to what many assume, Misiones Province is not surrounded by water on three sides but open on its northeastern flank to BRAZIL. This is an important consideration in any military confrontation between the two countries.

1. (U) Characteristics of North East Border Area.

a. ARGENTINA shares a common border with BRAZIL stretching from approximately 30° latitude north to the Iguazu Falls. This border area for the most part is clearly distinguished by the two large river systems - the Uruguay River and the Iguazu River as well as the smaller tributaries Pepiri Guazu and San Antonio. Due to the rather isolated nature of Misiones Province as well as the standard map markings which heavily accent the Misiones salient into BRAZIL, it is common for visitors and Argentines to believe that Misiones is surrounded by water on three sides. For the most part, it is. However, RO in a recent trip through the area (Nov 71) observed that nearly 95 kilometers of border are open

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17. DOWNGRADING DATA:

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18. ATTACHMENT DATA:

1 enclosure:

1. (U) Composite map utilizing map sheets 2754 "Obera" (compiled in 1955) and 2554 "Cataratas del Iguazu" (Compiled 1959); 1:500,000 scale by Argentine Military Geographic Institute; 1 cy.

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FORM 1 SEP 62 1396

REPLACES DA FORM 1048, 1 JUL 60,
 OPNAV FORM 3020 (Rev. 10-61),
 AF FORM 112, JUL 61, WHICH MAY BE
 USED UNTIL 1 JAN 63.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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to both sides with only small streams marking the border area. This area in question is located between San Antonio (26-10 S, 53-58 W), (See Encl.) south to coordinates LCTY 26-41 S, 53-48 W. Between these two points small wooden bridges exist which are of no military consequence since a vehicle with four-wheel traction could easily ford the area. North of Bernardo de Irigoyen (26-15 S, 53-39 W) for 25 kilometers there is only open land separating the two countries. Based on conversations with local Argentine Border Police, the depth of the Pepiri Guazu River does not become militarily significant until the Barrancan San Pedro (26-41 S, 53-48 W). From that point south the river steadily increases from an average depth of 5 feet.

b. Between San Antonio and Bernardo de Irigoyen the area is characterized by dense semi-tropical vegetation with red clay soil. National highway 14 (with extension 101) is the only major road in the area. It is a one-lane improved dirt road (in the area in question) which parallels the border area and is well maintained at the present time by the National Highway Department. Despite the windy, hilly nature of this route, speeds of 35 MPH can be maintained without trouble. Due to red clay surface, Route 14 and smaller roads in the area become unusable for limited periods of time during heavy rains.

c. San Antonio is actually located at 26-10 S, 53-58 W directly opposite its Brazilian counterpart bearing the same name. Thus the attached map is incorrect in its plotting of this Argentine town.

2. (U) Border Police Activities.

At both San Antonio and Bernardo de Irigoyen there are Argentine Gendarmery checkpoints. These border police stations fall under the command of the 10th Border Police Squadron at El Dorado (26-23 S, 54-40 W) which is part of the larger IV Gendarmery Group of the Misiones command at Posadas. The checkpoints mentioned above had only one man on duty who checked the RO's documentation. RO crossed over to the Brazilian side at San Antonio. The Brazilian security checkpoint was manned by one person dressed in shoddy civilian attire with a "farwest" holster and colt 45 pistol. He was satisfied by RO's request to proceed to the nearest tire-repair shop with his vehicle and did not check him for documentation. The bridge separating the two countries at San Antonio was wooden about 15 feet in length, 10 ft. wide and spanning a small stream. Both border policemen indicated that Brazilians could enter ARGENTINA in Misiones Province for a period of 72 hours and up to 50 kilometers inland without any special visa or documentation. Due to the above, this border area is characterized by free movement of the local populace between both countries. This has affected the ethnic characteristics of both towns with the speech patterns and skin color showing an obvious mixture of the two cultures.

COMMENTS: (C) This contiguous border area is significant in any military confrontation between ARGENTINA and BRAZIL. There are no regular Argentine Army units permanently stationed in Misiones Province. Argentine contingency plans (based on conversations between RO and Argentine Army officers stationed with the 3rd Artillery Group at Paso de Los Libres (29-43 S, 57-05 W) apparently are oriented towards threats to their border south of Misiones Province. In fact, field grade officers of the 3rd Artillery Group at Paso de Los Libres were surprised to discover that a contiguous land border area existed near San Antonio and made several wagers to the RO that Misiones was isolated on three sides by water. In the opinion of the RO, the San Antonio-Bernardo de Irigoyen border area does present an excellent avenue of approach for infantry and light armored units due to the non-restrictive terrain and excellent concealment. In the case of armored units, high speed movement would be restricted to the existing road network. A disadvantage to an attacking force entering Argentine territory via North East Misiones Province would be the lack of maneuver space at the lower neck of the Province which measures roughly 75 kilometers in width.

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